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COMIREX-D-10.3/1

12 July 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation

SUBJECT: Need for Additional Photographic Reconnaissance
Coverage of the Middle East

1. Attached is a redraft of OPCEN 4169. Although the majority of the recommended changes are given effect, attention is invited to other suggestions which deserve consideration and may need to be incorporated. These are:

a. Instead of expanding paragraph 1 d, in accordance with rewording by NRO, add the following to 1 c: "CORONA coverage can meet OB requirements in the Middle East but not the standing requirements [redacted]". Then shorten 1 d to read as follows: "Satellite quick reaction capability is limited to a general R-9 response time which can be modified for not more than two months by holding two CORONAs at R-1 for a maximum time of 30 days each."

b. The Department of State wishes to add the following proviso as a footnote: "That any contingency planning involving approaches to foreign governments or use of facilities in foreign countries be coordinated in advance with the Department of State."

2. Inasmuch as this paper now attempts to combine contingency planning by the military as well as the operational units now responsible for U-2 and the OXCART, you may wish to consider the advisability of adding one recommendation. This would be that those with the responsibility for operational activities which have a potential for coverage of the Middle East report to USIB by a certain date on the status of this contingency planning.

3. This subject and the attached will be on the COMIREX agenda for 13 July.

Executive Secretary

Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation

Attachment
Draft memo

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
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MEMORANDUM FOR: United States Intelligence Board

SUBJECT: Need for Additional Photographic
Reconnaissance Coverage of the
Middle East

1. COMIREX has examined the need for possible additional photographic reconnaissance coverage of the Middle East. As a result of this examination COMIREX has concluded as follows:

a. Photographic coverage acquired by Missions

1042J (17 June to 1 July) [] [] have provided an adequate, current base line of photographic information on reconnaissance objectives in the Middle East.

b. There is no foreseeable need for additional coverage of the Middle East by manned aircraft within the immediate future.

c. The present satellite launch schedule of CORONA [] [] will provide coverage approximately every 35 to 40 days. The photographic satellite program will not be able to acquire adequate coverage alone if there should be some radical change in the situation in the Middle East during the longer term future.

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d. The closest approximation of a satellite capability to respond to an alert is the CORONA. Based on recent experience CORONA coverage does have a fairly good capability to meet broad OB requirements in this part of the world. It does not, however, meet the present standing requirement [REDACTED] With regard to the responsiveness of CORONA, NRO advises that it maintains a CORONA at R-9. The CORONA program has the capability to be held at R-1 for a maximum of 30 days. This capability has been exercised one time and it was successful. The introduction of the modified camera system is not anticipated to affect this capability. NRO advises that this capability could be exercised under urgent requirements for not more than two months.

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e. The situation in the Middle East is sufficiently unstable to make it necessary for us to prepare to acquire additional photographic reconnaissance coverage on reasonably short notice.

f. The U-2 and the high-altitude drone could provide this coverage in most areas but in view of

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political constraints as well as the threat of air defense systems most likely to be associated with priority target areas we believe that it is imperative that a capability also be established to cover those targets by very high-altitude, high-performance aircraft.

g. Contingency planning should be undertaken for prompt deployment of military reconnaissance capabilities, the U-2, and OXCART. The planning for the U-2 to take into account availability of an aircraft carrier and contingency planning for both the U-2 and OXCART to include preliminary arrangements for support equipment and fuel, and the requirement for base rights for launch and recovery.

2. It is recommended that USIB approve:

a. Essential contingency planning by appropriate operational authorities which will permit future coverage of the Middle East by high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft on notice of a few days of need for such coverage.

b. NRO maintain its present CORONA launch schedule and not attempt to bring a CORONA to R-1 as a standby capability.

Chairman

Committee on Imagery Requirements and Exploitation

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43 Asst Ops/NPIC for

44 Asst Ops/NPIC for

45 C/IAS/DDI (Attn:)

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46 TSO CIA

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48 ASA/D/DCI/NIPE

49 D/OSI

50 D/OSP

51 D/ILSS/DDS&T

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54 D/O/OSA

55 Intel/O/OSA

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57 SA/OSA

58 D/FMSAC

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